

# **GILA NATIONAL FOREST**



# **NEWS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Prescribed Fires Continue on Gila National Forest**

(Silver City, NM – April 17, 2006) - Fire Managers on the Gila National Forest have been monitoring weather and fuel conditions very closely in order to seize opportunities to implement several prescribed fires across the Forest. In the Mimbres Valley, the McKnight and Little McKnight projects began two weeks ago, when crews were able to commit to 2 ½ days of burning operations to the project site, 3 miles northeast of the Wilderness Ranger Station. The following week, resources relocated from the Mimbres Valley to the Burro Mountains, 15 miles east of Silver City and northwest of the Oak Grove Subdivision, to commence ignitions on Silverdale/Wildhorse prescribed fire project. The areas were effectively treated, however, some situations still exist that would further improve with additional treatment. Currently, crews are assigned to the Wilderness Ranger District, where they will be treating areas within the perimeter of the McKnight project. The Quemado Ranger Station is planning to start burning operations on two units of the East Centerfire Prescribed Fire about 35 miles southwest of Quemado; while the Reserve District plans ignitions on the Gatlin and Squirrel Springs projects early next week. Prescribed fire activities are ongoing on the Black Range District's Indian Peaks project, 48 miles northwest of Truth or Consequences, NM.

Weather and fuel conditions are key factors that dictate whether or not to proceed with the ignition phase on the projects. The availability of resources and the degree of activity of other fire-related incidents are considered prior to ignitions, as well. Fire managers may elect to postpone or delay ignitions, if conditions warrant.

Objectives of the fires are two-fold, as dense fuels that have accumulated are reduced, wildlife habitat conditions will improve. In areas where piñon and juniper trees are being treated, an added benefit will be to the areas' watersheds.

For general information regarding fire activity on the Gila National Forest, please contact the fire information officer at 505-388-8245 or visit the website: [www.fs.fed.us/r3/gila](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/gila).

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